DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 149 522 EC 103 595

AUTHOR	Fafard, Mary-Beth
TITLE	Paraprofessional Movement in Special Education: Historical Perspective.
INSTITUTION	City Univ. of New York, N.Y. Queens Coll. New Careers Training Lab.
SPONS AGENCY	Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	CASE-11-77
PUB DATE	77
GRANT	G-007-601-963
NOTE	19p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Trends; Effective Teaching; Elementary Secondary Education; *Handicapped Children; Literature Reviews; *Paraprofessional School Personnel; Research Reviews (Publications); Staff Utilization; Training

ABSTRACT

The first of a series of four documents, the paper reviews the paraprofessional movement in special education from 1957 to 1977 with regard to utilization, training, and efficacy on handicapped children's performance. Data collected (1973-74) on the paraprofessional utilization in educational programs for handicapped children is seen to suggest that paraprofessionals were primarily being used to provide instruction to handicapped children and to increase the delivery of individualized instruction to the handicapped. The majority of paraprofessional training is noted to be described in the literature as short-term in-service training in specific skill areas of delivery. Research on the impact that trained paraprofessionals have on handicapped children is summarized as indicating that paraprofessionals working with handicapped children have a direct effect on children's academic performance; and that in comparison with professionals, paraprofessionals perform as well, and in some instances better. (SBH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED149522

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Paraprofessional Movement in Special Education: Historical Perspective

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mary Beth Fafard

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Mary-Beth Fafard

EC 10 3595

New Careers Training Laboratory
Center for Advanced Study in Education
The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York

CASE 11-77
1977

This paper is one in a series prepared by the New Careers Training Laboratory as part of work supported by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, USOE (Grant number G-007-601-963).

The papers in the series are: 1) The Paraprofessional Movement in Special Education: Historical Perspective (A Review of the Literature), 2) Training of Paraprofessionals in Special Education: A Selected Bibliography, 3) Task Analysis for Paraprofessionals Working with Severely/Profoundly Handicapped Children and in "Mainstream" classrooms, 4) The Training and Utilization of Paraprofessionals in Special Education, 1977; Survey Results and Descriptions of Training Programs. They may be obtained from: The New Careers Training Laboratory, Center for Advanced Study in Education, Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York, 184 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010.

The project was under the leadership of Anna Lou Pickett. We are appreciative of the assistance given to the work by Frances Dory, Mary-Beth Fafard, Phyllis Kelly and Barbara Reid, and the support of our project officer Edward Moore.

Alan Gartner
Project Director

The material contained in these papaers does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Office of Education and no official endorsement of the U.S.O.E. should be inferred.

Quality delivery of appropriate educational services to all handicapped children is the prime objective of special education. Quality is not simply achieved by increasing the numbers of people involved in providing educational services. It demands critical attention toward the kind of training given to personnel at all levels. Professional accountability, PL 94-142, and consumer advocacy groups have prompted a closer examination of the type of training received by special education personnel. While historically examination has been primarily on the training of certified special education teachers (Burke, 1976), recently an increasing amount of attention has focused on the training and utilization of paraprofessionals in the service delivery to the handicapped (NCTL, 1974); Reid and Reid, 1974; Saettler, 1976; Tucker, Hollis, Sailor, Horner, Kelly, and Guess, 1976). Several factors have influenced examining paraprofessional training: (a) the changing role of the certified teacher in special education, (b) the wide use of paraprofessionals in programs for severely/profoundly handicapped, (c) federal support and recognition of paraprofessionals, and (d) the increasing amount of training paraprofessionals are receiving through community college and inservice programs.

Paraprofessionals (aides, teacher assistants/associates) are not a recent development in special education. Non-degree personnel have been used extensively to facilitate learning and aid in administrative functioning in special education (Birch, 1963); Blessing,

1967; Cruickshank and Haring, 1957; Hanson, 1969). However, systematic dissemination of information on paraprofessional training, roles and responsibilities, and impact on handicapped children's learning has only recently been coordinated through a Bureau of Education for the Handicapped funded project conducted by New Careers Training Laboratory (Fafard, 1975; NCTL, 1974).

The paraprofessional movement in special education is best viewed in the framework of the general paraprofessional movement in the human service professions. The paraprofessional movement in the human service professions gained momentum in the sixties. Gartner and Riessman (1974) identified five major reasons instrumental in the movement's development: (a) consumer awareness of the inadequacies of traditional service deliver, (b) recognition of the barriers preventing the poor from achieving professional status, (c) acceptance by professionals of paraprofessionals, in part to serve as bridges to minority communities, (d) the need for jobs, and (e) the shortage of personnel for human service work. During the seventies, the movement has focused on insuring quality service delivery. Direct involvement of the paraprofessional in meaningful activities has heightened the quality of service. The viewpoint is of two qualified workers both concerned about providing high quality human services. It has now been recognized that paraprofessionals can successfully conduct direct service work in education, health care, and social services (Gartner, 1971).

Specifically in general education, paraprofessionals were seen as augmenting professional service, reducing the unemployment of the poor, and improving educational delivery by providing a community and cultural focus. The widespread use of paraprofessionals in general education released teachers to spend more time with individual students, increased preparation time, and resulted in instructional improvement. Paraprofessionals were shown to have a direct impact on the learning of children. Gartner, Jackson, and Riessman (1977) indicated that the utilization of paraprofessionals has resulted in gains in children's reading, increased verbalization, and created more child-to-child interaction.

The largest national project of paraprofessionals in education was the Career Opportunities Program (COP), a demonstration project established under the Education Professions Development Act. The COP program provided clear evidence that paraprofessionals could play an innovative role in schools. The program increased low-income and minority group participation in public schools, as well as affecting the structure and staffing patterns of local education agencies. The training of paraprofessionals in a cooperative effort of field-based experience and theoretical course work resulted in professionals of a higher standard (Carter, 1976; Kaplan, 1977).

While the use of paraprofessionals in special education is both widespread and well documented, a thorough historical overview of the paraprofessional movement in special education has not been done. Literature available on paraprofessional utilization, training,

and efficacy in special education is scattered in a variety of sources. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to document the paraprofessional movement in special education from 1957 to 1977 with regard to (a) utilization, (b) training, and (c) efficacy on handicapped children's performance. The latter part of the paper will draw some conclusions on the paraprofessional movement in special education.

Utilization, Roles and Responsibilities

While the use of paraprofessionals in programs for handicapped children may have existed for decades, the first documentation of their systematic use was in 1957. Cruickshank and Haring (1957) demonstrated the benefits of using teacher assistants in special classes, regular classes, and in itinerant services with a range of handicapped children. Indeed, the success of their program prompted Cruickshank and Haring to speculate that the use of paraprofessionals may be the only basis upon which to achieve successful integration of handicapped children into regular classrooms - today's mainstreaming.

Since then, the literature clearly indicates that paraprofessionals have been successfully involved in providing a range of services to retarded children (Blessing and Cook, 1970; Budner, Arnold, and Goodman, 1971; Hanson, 1969; Johnson and Ferryman, 1969); emotionally disturbed children (Cowen, Dorr, Sandler, and McWilliams, 1971; Nictern, Donahue, O'Shea, Marans, Curtis, and Brody, 1964; Terrel, McWilliams, and Cowen, 1972); preschool handicapped children

(Karnes, Teska, and Hodgins, 1970; Olshin, 1971; Schortinghuis and Frohman, 1974); children exhibiting learning difficulties (Ellson, 1975; Frelow, Charry, and Freilich, 1974; Jones, 1969; Mitchell, 1971); children with speech problems (Gray and Barker, 1977); and severely/profoundly handicapped children (Cortazzo, Bradtke, Kirkpatrick, and Rosenblatt, 1971; Guess, Smith, and Ensminger, 1971; Tucker and Horner, 1977; Turton, 1976). With this range of handicapped children, paraprofessionals have been used for both instructional and non-instructional activities. However, the majority of reports depicted trained paraprofessionals delivering direct instructional services to handicapped children.

The roles and responsibilities that paraprofessionals have taken in programs for handicapped children seem to have evolved from simply performing non-teaching duties to more direct interaction in instructional delivery. The beginning attempts at delineating roles and responsiblities centered around identifying nonteaching duties which would release the special education teacher to spend additional time in individualized instruction with handicapped children (Blessing, 1967; Cruickshank and Haring, 1957; Hanson, 1969; Watson, 1971). This type of specification had paraprofessionals providing assistance to the teacher (e.g., assist teacher in preparing materials); doing the general housekeeping tasks (e.g., collect lunch money, take attendance); and engaging in managerial supervision (e.g., supervise recess, lunch period).

The more recent role specification for paraprofessionals has been based on a competency framework (Reid and Reid, 1974; Tucker, et. al., 1976; Tucker and Horner, 1977). The empnasis has been on identifying skills that are necessary to work effectively with handicapped children regardless of professional status. For the most efficient delivery of educational services, Tucker and colleagues indicated that both the paraprofessional and the professional must possess skills that are directly related to changing behavior of handicapped children (e.g., following a specific programmed teaching sequence). Thus, the prime focus of paraprofessional utilization is on providing direct instructional services.

The research data collected by the New Careers Training Laboratory in 1973-74 provided the most comprehensive coverage of paraprofessional utilization in educational programs for handicapped children. The data collected indicated that paraprofessionals were primarily being used to provide instruction to handicapped children and to increase the delivery of individualized instruction to the handicapped (NCTL, 1974).

The literature reviewed reflected that the use of paraprofessionals in programs for handicapped children has undergone changes. The early attempts of shredding out educational services according to professional and nonprofessional has given way to a more concentrated focus of two professionals working toward providing effective service delivery. In this way, the paraprofessional movement in special education is similar to the general paraprofessional movement.

There has been increased documentation of paraprofessionals delivering direct services to handicapped children through: (a) programmed packaged materials (Hofmeister, 1975; Hofmeister and Atkinson, 1975; Lent, 1975; Thiagarajan, 1975); (b) providing direct language therapy (Gray and Barker, 1977; Guess, et. al., 1971); (c) conducting specific preschool programs (Karnes, et. al., 1970; Schortinghuis and Frohman, 1974); and, (d) doing assessment and evaluation (Tracy and Gibbons, 1976).

Training

While the use of paraprofessionals in programs for handicapped children has been firmly established, the question of training has been of primary interest in much of the literature. A range of training models have been utilized for paraprofessionals in special education (Budner, et. al., 1971; Cortazzo, et. al., 1971; Cowen, et. al., 1971; Cruickshank and Haring, 1957; Hanson, 1969; Reid and Reid, 1974; Schachter, 1974; Terrel, et., al., 1972; Tucker, et. al., 1976). Primarily, the type of training provided has been either: (a) community college training programs and/or (b) in-service training by a state educational agency or other institutional facility serving the handicapped.

Community college training programs have provided both (a) pre-service training leading to either an associates degree or a certificate of training, and (b) in-service training which emphasizes upgrading of skills of paraprofessionals who are employed in programs

for the handicapped (Fafard, 1975). Training periods have varied in length depending on whether a degree is sought. The training programs provided by community colleges combined both theoretical coursework and practical experience with a variety of handicapped children (Hanson, 1969; Reid and Reid, 1974). The community college programs described in the literature provide training in (a) basic core of courses in child development, handicapping conditions, interpersonal communication, (b) training in techniques that are effective with handicapped children, and (c) on-the-job training in settings with handicapped children. The CASE program described by Reid and Reid is a model of this kind of training.

However, the majority of training described in the literature has been short-term in-service training in specific skill areas of delivery. The length of time has varied from two weeks to a 48 week training period. The training has been given in institutional centers for the mentally retarded (Cortazzo, et. al., 1971; Budner, et. al., 1971; Johnson and Ferryman, 1969) and in community service settings (Cowen, et. al., 1971; Mitchell, 1971). These types of in-service training programs have stressed basically: (a) orientation to the particular setting, (b) necessary skills needed to work with the population, (c) awareness of attitudes toward the handicapped, and (d) the human relation factors in working with staff.

More recently, attention has focused on the type of training paraprofessionals need in order to work with the severely/profoundly handicapped. Tucker and colleagues (1976, 1977) have detailed a

performance-based preservice curricula for the preparation of both teachers and paraprofessionals of the severely/profoundly handicapped. The training model is built around modules in two components: information competencies and performance competencies. The required training for paraprofessionals consist of "...11 courses, including practica, sequenced across five semesters of training" (p. 407, 1977). Turton, Peck and McDonald (1977) have utilized needs assessment techniques to identify the competencies needed by personnel working with severely/profoundly handicapped children. The needs assessment conducted resulted in pinpointing areas of in-service training for paraprofessionals.

With regard to training, the literature reflected that a variety of training paradigms have been used. Specifically, however, the literature demonstrated that paraprofessionals are receiving more specific training in providing direct services to handicapped children. The trend, similar to teacher training, is toward competency-based specification of skills.

Efficacy on Handicapped Children's Performance

Some research has been done on the direct effect of paraprofessionals on handicapped children's learning performance. Blessing and Cook (1970) undertook a three-year study of the effects of teacher aides on pupil behavior in primary and intermedicate educable mentally retarded classes. Analysis of the data on 17 aides in 20 classes resulted in aides having the greatest impact on primary classes and in reducing behaviors in the classroom.

Both Schortinghuis and Frohman (1974) and Karnes et, al. (1970) have compared the effect of paraprofessionals on the performance of preschool handicapped children with that of professionals. Using Portage Project curriculum with 37 preschool children, Schortinghuis and Frohman compared gains made on communication and academic subtests of the Alpern-Boll Developmental Profile by children taugnt by paraprofessionals and those taught by professionals. Results indicated that with regard to communication skills, paraprofessionals and professionals did not differ significantly. However, in academics, data indicated that paraprofessionals had more success in teaching handicapped preschool children than did the professionals.

In comparing the effects of paraprofessionals and professionals on preschool disadvantaged children's performance, Karnes et. al. found that the performance of the children did not differ on the battery of given tests (Binet, ITPA, Frostig, Metropolitan Readiness). Children made significant gains regardless of the status of the teacher. In this study, paraprofessionals had received intensive inservice training.

Gray and Barker (1977) compared the performance of children receiving articulation therapy from either a trained aide or a professional clinician. Comparison between pre-criterion test scores and post-criterion test scores indicated no significant differences between aides and clinicians. These findings provide support for trained aides delivering direct articulation therapy to children.

Several researchers have examined the impact that trained paraprofessionals have on direct performance gains of handicapped children. Guess et. al, (1971) showed gains in language performance of severely handicapped children taught by paraprofessionals. Mitchell (1971), Frelow et. al., (1975) and Jones (1969) have demonstrated academic gains in reading with low performing children taught by paraprofessionals.

In summary, the research that has been done indicated that paraprofessionals working with handicapped children have a direct effect on children's academic performance. In comparison with professionals, the research indicated that paraprofessionals perform as well, and in some instances better. While these studies may have limitations in their general design, they do lend support to the impact that paraprofessionals can have on children's learning.

Conclusion

Since 1957, the literature lends substantial support to the usefulness and benefits of paraprofessionals in special education. Whether used in a one-to-one situation or in group process, trained paraprofessionals have had a direct impact on the quality of service delivery to handicapped children. Studies reflected that not only do paraprofessionals relieve the special education teacher for more advanced work, but they also have an impact on children's learning.

The literature review reflected the concerns for type of training received as well as a trend toward competency-based approaches to training. Overall, the support for trained paraprofessionals delivering instruction directly to handicapped children was overwhelming. Historically and presently, paraprofessionals have a large role to play in the delivery of quality service to handicapped children.

References

Birch, J.W. The nonprofessional worker in special education and rehabilitation: A review of the literature. Rehabilitation Literature, 1963, 24, 66-74.

Blessing, K. and Cook(J. Class size and teacher aides as factors in the achievement of the educable mentally retarded. Final Report. Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped. Grant # EG-3-0626620-1878. August, 1970.

Budner, S., Arnold, I., and Goodman, L. The plan and reality: Training and utilization of paraprofessionals for service to the retarded. American Journal of Public Health, 1971, 297-307.

Burke, P.J. Personnel preparation: Historical perspective. Exceptional Children, 1976 43, 144-146.

Carter, W.T. The career opportunities program: A summing up. COP Bulletin. New Careers Training Laboratory, Queens College, 184 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York, 10010, 1976.

Cortazzo, A., Bradtke, L., Kirkpatrick, W., and Rosenblatt, K. Innovations to improve care in an institution for mentally retarded. Children, 1971, 18, 149-154.

Cowen, E., Dorr, D., Sandler, I., and McWilliams, S. Utilization of nonprofessional child-aide school mental health program. Journal of School Psychology, 1971, 9, 131-136.

Cruickshank, W., and Haring, N. Assistants for Teachers of Exceptional Children. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1957.

Ellson, D.G. Programmed tutoring. Paper presented at the Management of Paraprofessional Personnel Workshop, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, May, 1975.

Fafard, M.B. Paraprofessionals in special education: Update report. New Careers Training Laboratory, Queens College, 184 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010, 1975.

Frelow, R., Charry, J., and Freilich, B. Academic progress and behavioral changes in low achieving pupils. The Journal of Educational Research, 1974, 67, 263-266.

Gartner, A. Paraprofessionals and their performance: A survey of education, health, and social service programs. New York: Praeger Publications, 1971.

Gartner, A., Jackson, V.C., and Riessman, F. Paraprofessionals in education. New York: Behavikral Sciences Press, 1977.

Gartner, A., and Riessman, F. The paraprofessional movement in perspective. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1974, 53, 253-256.

Gray, B.B., and Barker, K. Use of aides in an articulation therapy program. Exceptional Children, 1977, 43, 534-536.

Guess, D., Smith, J., and Ensminger, E. The role of non-professional persons in teaching language skills to mentally retarded children. Exceptional Children, 1977, 37, 447-453.

Hanson, F. Aides for the trainable mentally retarded. CTA Journal, 1969, 65, 23-26.

Hofmeister, A. The parent as an instructional agent. Paper presented at the Management of Paraprofessional Personnel Workshop, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, May, 1975.

Hofmeister, A., and Atkinson, C. The telepac project: A service delivery model for the severely handicapped in rural areas. Paper presented at the Management of Paraprofessional Personnel Workshop, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, May, 1975.

Johnson, D., and Ferryman, Z. Inservice training for non-professional personnel in a mental retardation center. Mental Retardation, 1969, 7, 10-13.

Jones, J. Dyslexia: Identification and remediation in a public school setting. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 1969, 2, 533-538.

Kaplan, G. From aide to teacher: The story of the Career Opportunities Program, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, OE 76-1210.

Karnes, M.B., Teska, J.A., and Hodgins, A.S. The successful implementation of a highly specific preschool instructional program by paraprofessional teachers. Journal of Special Education, 1970, 4(1), 69-80.

Lent, J. Project MORE: Past, present, and future. Paper presented at the Management of Paraprofessional Personnel Workshop, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, May, 1975.

Mitchell, M.M. Non-professional personnel become professional teachers. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 1971, 177-184.

Nichtern, S., Donahue, G., O'shea, J., Marans, M., Curtis, M., and Brody, C. A community educational program for the emotionally disturbed child. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1964, 34, 705-713.

Olshin, G. Model centers for preschool handicapped children: Year II. Exceptional Children, 1971, 37, 655-669.

Reid, B.A., and Reid, W.R. Role expectations of paraprofessional staff in special education. Focus on Exceptional Children, 1974, 6(7), 1-14.

Saettler, H. Current priorities in personnel preparation. Exceptional Children, 1976, 43, 147-148.

Schachter, G. The training and utilization of COP participants in education of the handicapped. COP Bulletin, 7, 1974.

Schortinghuis, N.E., and Frohman, A. A comparison of paraprofessional and professional success with preschool children. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 1974, 7, 245-247.

Terrel, D., Spencer, A., McWilliams, S., and Cowen, E. Description and evaluation of group-work training for non-professional aides in a school mental health program. Psychology in the Schools, 1972, 9, 70-75.

Thiagarajan, S. The history and futurology of programmed tutoring by paraprofessionals. Paper presented at the Management of Paraprofessional Personnel Workshop, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, May, 1975.

Tracy, M.L. and Gibbins, S. Implementation of individual education programs. Case Conference: Simulation and Source Book, Tracy, M., Gibbins, S., and Kladder, F., editors. Developmental Training Associates, 1976, 83-112.

Tucker, D., Hollis, J., Sailor, W., Horner, D., Kelly, P., and Guess, D. Preparing paraprofessional personnel for education of the severely handicapped: The teaching associate. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 1976, 274-279.

Tucker, D., and Horner, D. Competency-based training of paraprofessional teaching associates for education of the severely and profoundly handicapped. In Educational Programming for the Severely and Profoundly Handicapped, Sontag, E., Smith, J., Certo, N. editors. CEC Publication, 1977.

Turton, L., and Smith, J.M. Staff integration for services to the severely handicapped. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Council of Exceptional Children Chicago, Illinois, 1976.

Turton, L.J., Peck, A.F., McDonaly, G. Needs assessment of instructional personnel serving the severely handicapped. Institute for the Study of Mental Retardation and Related Disabilities, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1977.

Watson, H. Critical job specifications for special education aides. Dissertation Abstracts. University Microfilms, Wayne State University, 1971.

The utilization and training of paraprofessionals in special education: Present status and future prospects. New Careers Training Laboratory (NCTL), Queens College, New York, New York, 1974.